In order to reduce expenditure on imports of petroleum products, efforts are being made to increase the refining capacity by taking up expansion of existing refineries and setting-up of new gra5sroot refineries in the public sector, joint venture and private sector besides promoting conservation of petroleum products in various fields.

Private Companies in LPG Marketing

2939. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that no private Company has so far launched the distribution of LPG for domestic use in the country despite the fact that Government had permitted pri vate trade in LPG almost a year ago;

(b) if so, what are the details and reasons therefor;

(c) what is the number of private companies which have started importing LPG with details thereof; and

(d) whether such imports have enhanced the availability of LPG in the country?

THE MINTSTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH |SHARMA): (a) to (d) Two private sector companies have so far imported about 6.1 TMT of LPG under the parallel marketing system, most of which has been sold in bulk to Industry. One company has planned to import packed LPG in cylinders and start its distribution for domestic use shortly.

Supply of Kerosene and LPG by private oil companies

2940. SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that the private oil companies are coming up in a big way for supply of kerosene and LPG in India; and

(b) if so, what are the terms and conditions Government have imposed on them for regulating the oil supplies in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) The response to the parallel marketing system of kerosene and LPG by *the* pri-vate sector has been encouraging.

(b) Under the Parallel Marketing System, private agencies en import and market kerosene and LPG. using| setting up their own infrastructure and distribution net-work, at market determined prices to domestic, non-domestic and industrial customers. They are, however, required to obtain necessary approvals under the relevant Acts|Rules from Central State local authorities regarding safety, pollution control etc. as applicable. Under the LPG (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 1993, and the Kerosene (Restriction on use and Fixation of Ceiling Price) Order 1993. the parallel marketeers are required to inornate their intention and capabilities to import and sell LPG| Kerosene before commencement of such activities and submit a monthly report giving details of the products imported by them. Besides they have to furnish to the Government or to such agencies authorised by Government all relevant particulars